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Fig. 1. *Siva (Nataraja)*

S. Indian, about 1800

Saiva Sculptures

*Recent Acquisitions**

The Use of Images. The Yoga system, the basis of which is pre-Buddhist, consists in the attainment of certain states of consciousness, chiefly by means of attention, *dharana*, defined as "fixing the mind upon some object defined in space." The commentary known as the *Yoga bhashya* quotes from the *Vishnu Purana*: "The embodied form of the Exalted One leaves one without desire for any other support. This should be understood to be 'fixed attention' when the mind-stuff is fixed upon this form. . . . Fixed attention is not possible without something on which to fix it." There follows exclusive focusing of the presented idea upon the object contemplated and identification of the consciousness with the form of the object contemplated. The visible image of the deity thus presents a means (*sadhana*) of self-identification, or union, with the deity through the chosen form.

This is the rationale or philosophical justification of image worship to which has been naturally added the idea of service and propitiation, implying ultimately the existence of temples, priests, and temple servants.

It should be needless to say that an icon, whether for permanent or temporary use — many are made for temporary use and subsequently destroyed — has no religious value as such. Apart from the worship paid to it, it is merely a piece of metal or stone. It is prepared for worship by a special ritual of consecration (*avahana* or "drawing in" — upon the analogy of "conveying," we might say "inveying" — of the deity), and is then regarded as a special and convenient means of access to the god; the deity is present in the image and temple, just as in a church, which is spoken of as the "house of God," notwithstanding that God is actually regarded as

*All the objects described in the present article, with the exception of one (Fig. 7) given by Sir William Beardsell, were purchased through Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy in India, from the Marianne Brimmer Fund.

omnipresent, or as dwelling in a heaven. An image deconsecrated or defiled is no longer sacrosanct, and requires a fresh performance of the office of consecration before it is fit for use.

It is true that innumerable texts of Indian sculptures declare the unknowableness of God: not to mention the purely philosophical systems, and in particular the Upanishads and the Vedānta. A single example may be cited from the *Tiruvāṇṇam* of Manikka Vāṇar, the well-known Saiva hymnist of the South: "He is passing the description of words, not comprehensible by the mind, not visible to the eye and other senses;" or from the *Tiruvārūṇṇam* of Umapati: "He is one with Form, one without Form, and both with and without a Form." These very same poets elsewhere constantly speak of the attributes of God, refer to the legendary accounts of his actions, and take for granted the use and service of images. The Indian philosopher, in fact, however much he may be an Idealist and Monist, justifies whole-heartedly the worship of a personal God and the use of images, inasmuch as the "unshown way" (of those who seek a direct attainment of unconditioned consciousness) is "exceeding hard"; for himself as for others, the use of "means" is an inevitable concession to the nature of mortal beings — the plastic image no less than the name or the verbal image of the deity. For one who has realized the Supreme Brahman in himself — the mystic who enjoys immediate experience — there is, of course, no necessity to practise *any* particular mode of worship; an image is merely a "convenient means" for those who have not attained to such states of grace. Worship implies an object of worship; the unconditioned and absolute cannot be so regarded by us, and hence the necessity of icons.

Indian ritual, in spite of the existence of temples and priests, has remained essentially an individual office rather than a congregational rite. Even at a temple the incumbent is merely the officiating agent on behalf of the devotee by whom the temple has been endowed or who visits the god in a temple endowed by others. The essential part of personal worship consists in the service of an image, mentally visualized or visibly and iconographically represented in accordance with a *dhyānam*, *mantram*, *sādhana* or other text defining the form and attributes of a deity. A comparison of these texts with the forms of existing sculptures is thus the iconographer's only sure guide. The imager makes use of similar or identical texts, which he is required to visualize and contemplate before proceeding to his actual handiwork; the mental image is his only model. To make such images of the gods is meritorious; to make a likeness of a human being, sinful.

Images are of various kinds according to their use: immovable, usually of stone, in the main shrines of temples; movable, usually of metal, and carried in temple processions; and individual, worshipped in private chapels or carried about for purposes of daily worship. Those which form an integral part of the temple architecture are not, on the other hand, cult objects, but rather exegetical in character, illustrating the manifestations of the deity in detail.

The forms of the deities, which "are determined by the relation which exists between the adorer and the object of adoration" (Sukracarya), were at first comparatively few and simple; afterwards, partly by the recognition of new divinities of popular origin, partly by the deification of metaphysical concepts, the number of aspects and variety of form increased. It may be remarked that after the first century A. D. the typical form of a god is four-armed. The additional arms are to carry the attributes of the god; still more complicated forms have come into use at later periods. Finally, it may be said that the visible imagery of the Hindu (and Buddhist) pantheon represents, as precisely as the written texts, an encyclopædia of Indian psychological and social, ethical and physical science — each divinity or aspect of divinity (for all are referred to one source) representing a particular power or force, or combination of forces. The latest concept to be deified after this fashion is that of the Motherland, the *Mātā Bharatā* of Indian Nationalism. The fruit of the worship of such deities results from the effects of the worshipper's own spiritual acts upon his own personality, and is far from unreal.

It will be understood that Indian religious figures have never been regarded as works of art. They are useful objects

made by craftsmen in response to a command or demand for the clear and repeated presentation of a given form with a known significance. Precisely as in European Christian Art, "the artistic representation of sacred subjects was a science governed by fixed laws which could not be broken at the dictates of individual imagination," and "through the medium of art the highest conceptions of theologian and scholar penetrated to some extent the minds of even the humblest of the people."^{*} In the art of India every form is the symbol of a clear and conscious thought and of consciously directed feeling. Nothing is arbitrary or peculiar, nothing is vague or mysterious, for the very *raison d'être* of all the imagery is to present concrete ideas in comprehensible and easily apprehended forms.

An art such as this is always impersonal; that is to say, it is never an expression of personal idiosyncrasy. Nor can any one form be traced to the invention of an individual mind; behind the craftsman is the unanimous consciousness of the race, as behind the priest there is the church. The imager is such by hereditary vocation, and unlike the modern "artist," with his temperament, he belongs to the bourgeoisie, and should be a God-fearing, well-conducted householder, like any other professional man; unconventionality in India is tolerated only in a saint.

So far we have considered Indian sculpture as it has always been considered in India, solely from the standpoint of the *bhakti* or lover of a god. It will be seen that in writing of Indian sculptures we can consider them only from the standpoint of their original usage; that is to say, from the standpoint of the *bhakti* or lover of the god, referring incidentally to matters of related historical interest, such as details of costume, stance, and so forth, and to the technical methods of the craft. For those who approach a work of art in the light of immediate experience, and are concerned with the real content as distinct from the subject or literary motif of the work, all such interests will be extraneous, and to him we can only offer the sculptures as they stand, or as they may be seen in the accompanying reproductions; he will be able to recognize for himself the quality of a design and the degree of the vitality of the expression. It had never occurred to the Indian craftsman that his work could be considered from this point of view, still less to work with such an end in mind. The idea of art for art's sake and the romantic conception of "the artist" are foreign to Indian thought.

The Saiva Cults.[†] In India the development of cults of devotion to personal deities was already far advanced in the second century B. C. The origin of image worship is bound up with this development of "Hinduism," which represents a fusion of Vedic Brahmanism with popular animistic beliefs. Here, as in Mediæval Christianity, the dominating motifs are, on the one hand, those of loving worship (*bhakti*), and on the other of a scholastic theology. The great deities of this system are Siva and Vishnu, and the Goddess, Devi, in their many forms.

In the Vedas the word Siva is an epithet of Rudra, a personification of the storms and wilder forces of nature, also identified with Agni (fire) and with the Earth and the Winds. In the Puranic period Siva has become a name of the Supreme Being, his followers being spoken of as Saivas. The deity, however, who is thus regarded as a Supreme God and is said to be the soul of the universe, is not merely the old Vedic Rudra, but a synthesis of many concepts, philosophical and popular. As the Supreme Being all activities are his; but in so far as his character is special, he is still a god of destructive powers. He wanders through the world as a naked and penniless ascetic; he plays on musical instruments and dances in ecstasy; his locks are long and tangled, his body is smeared with ashes; he behaves like a madman, and dallies with the daughters and wives of the sages. His wife is Uma, daughter of Dakṣa: but because of his disreputable character and lack of social position he is not invited to visit his father-in-law — from which we understand that the Siva of the people, like the popular goddesses, was only with

^{*}Male, E. *Religious art of the thirteenth century in France*, 1913; pp. I and VII.

[†]The S in Siva and the derived adjective Saiva is pronounced as sh; similarly in Sakti and Sakta

difficulty admitted to a place in the Brahmanical pantheon. The earliest Saiva sects are worshippers of the *lingam* or phallus, and this erect pillar remains to the last the principal symbol of Siva, set up as the immovable image in the main shrines of Saiva temples. With Siva are commonly associated not only the Goddess Uma or Parvati, but also their two sons, Ganesa and Karttikeya, and Nandi, the bull, his vehicle; these five together constitute a family group, often with the addition of the tiger upon which the Goddess rides.

In these Saiva systems, based on the Sanskrit *Agamas*, there are recognized three categories — Pati or Pasupati, the Lord; Pasu, the flock; Pasa, the bond. The latter is three-fold, consisting of *Anava*, ignorance; *Karma*, the being subject to causality; and *Maya*, delusion, the material force of the visible world. Identity with Siva results when all fetters are removed. The means of creation is the Sakti or Energy of Siva. Merged in his being or associated with him as Uma or Parvati, she is the cause of the bondage of all beings (*i. e.*, the awakening of the soul to finite experience) and of their release. Consciousness is everywhere present, perfect in Siva and in liberated souls, but obscured and unshown in those who are not yet set free.

It should be observed that Devi, the Goddess, here alluded to as the Sakti or Energy, or more popularly the consort and wife of Siva, is worshipped independently as the Supreme Deity by those of the Sakta persuasion, and that all feminine deities, indeed, all things feminine, are aspects of this Sakti. Saktism has particularly close relations with Saivism; but in Saiva worship the Sakti is considered only in her relation to Siva. In iconography she may stand at Siva's side, or be seated at his side or upon his thigh; or may be considered as half of his form, as in representations of Ardhanarisvara.

UMA-MAHESVARA GROUPS

The earliest and largest of the Saiva sculptures recently acquired is an Uma-Mahesvara (Parvati and Siva — the name of the goddess always preceding that of the god in such combinations) group (Fig. 2, M. F. A. 21.1720) from Bundelkhand, north central India, of about the ninth century, in cream sandstone, in high relief. This is a work recalling the well-known sculptures of the eighth century at Elura.* Siva and Parvati are seated at ease in affectionate conversational relation (it will be remembered that many scriptures and myths are introduced, in the literary sense, as having been expounded or related by Siva to Parvati in response to her enquiries). Siva is four-armed, one arm embracing Parvati, the others holding various attributes; his hair is dressed high in ascetic fashion (*jata mukuta*) and he wears a *dhoti* (waist cloth) and the usual jewelry and sacred thread. A cobra raises its head above his right shoulder. Parvati's right hand rests on Siva's thigh,



Fig. 2. Uma-Mahesvara Group N. Indian, eighth or ninth century

her left on the seat. Two small female attendants stand beside the seated figures.

Below the seat are represented Ganesa, two-armed, leaning on a staff; the sage Bhṛngi, and behind him the bull Nandi, reclining; and on the extreme proper left, Subrahmanya (Karttikeya) riding on a peacock.

An almost identical composition is presented in a patinated brass group (Fig. 3, M. F. A. 21.1651) of about the eleventh century (Pala period) from Bengal.* Of Siva's four arms, one embraces Parvati; another, with the hand in *tripataka* position, lifts her face to meet his gaze; the two others carry a fruit and the trident (*trisula*). Parvati is seated on Siva's left thigh instead of at his side; her right arm embraces the deity's neck, the left holds a mirror. The two figures are supported by a lotus seat (*padmasana*) borne on a stem, which rises from an oval pedestal; branches of the stem support, on expanded flowers, small

*Cf. Rao, T. A. G. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, pls. XXVI-XXIX.

*Very similar metal images (Buddhist) of the ninth century have been found at Nalanda (Arch. Surv. India. Ann. Rep., 1917-1918, pl. XIV), and of the eleventh or twelfth century at Pagan (Rep. Sup. Arch. Surv. Burma 1920, pl. 111 and p. 26).

figures of Ganesa and Subrahmanya, right and left of the principal figures.

SOUTH INDIAN BRONZES

Indian "bronzes" (really in copper or more rarely in brass) of the Southern (Dravidian) school, which are best known by the Natarajas or dancing Sivas of the Madras and Colombo Museums, are well represented in this Museum by numerous examples, chiefly from the Beardsell Collection. These include two Natarajas and other forms of Siva; figures of Parvati; figures of Vishnu and Krishna; and of various Saiva and Vaishnava saints. Bronzes of this type appear to range in date from the eleventh century onwards, and continue to be made at the present day. The dating of particular examples is always difficult, as they bear no inscriptions, and the modern work is often of excellent quality. The Ceylon examples, from a Siva Devale at Polonnaruva, now in the Colombo Museum, cannot well be later than the twelfth century, as the city was finally abandoned about 1240. We know, moreover, that images of Saiva saints were set up in temples by Rajaraja Deva of Tanjore about 1014, and images of Vaishnava saints at least as early as the thirteenth century. Metal images of the deities must have been set up and worshipped much earlier. It may be further remarked that a comparison of the Brahmanical bronzes with the older Buddhist figures from the Bezvada district shows the continuity of the art; but the former show little trace of the Gupta style, and the majority now extant must be of later than twelfth century date. As elsewhere in Indian art, the earlier examples have fuller, more rounded features than the more recent works, in which the lips are thinner and the nose becomes sharply aquiline. In other words, the earlier Indian art is one of expression through mass; in later times, and particularly after the tenth or twelfth century, sculpture becomes our art of surfaces and outlines.

All the bronzes are cast by the *cire-perdue* process, either solid or with an earthy core. In the finer examples the work seems to have been completed on the wax model; in others, chiefly the later specimens, the metal casting has been tooled and chased. All are constructed in accordance with definite canons of proportion and attitude.

Turning now to the South Indian Saiva bronzes in the Museum collections, we shall first describe in some detail the more complete of the two Nataraja figures (Fig. 1, M. F. A. 21.1828). The deity is three-eyed and four-armed, and is represented as dancing within a flame-fringed



Fig. 3. Uma-Mahesvara Group

Bengal, eleventh century

glory upon a dwarfish "devil." The lower right hand is raised in the pose known as *abhaya hasta*, signifying "Do not fear," a sign of assurance to his lovers, the lower left arm is stretched across the breast in the position known as *gaja* or *danda hasta* ("elephant's trunk" or "staff"), the pendent hand pointing to the raised foot. The upper right arm holds a double drum (*dhaḥḥa*) such as is carried by Saiva ascetics: this kind of drum, having a pellet attached to a string, which pellet strikes the two parchments alternately, is sounded by a rapid to and fro movement of the hand. The upper left hand carries a flame (*agni*). The hair is partly dressed high in the ascetic fashion, tied by a cobra and surmounted by a fan of peacock's feathers or cassia leaves, and bears a skull and the crescent moon: the lower locks, in thin strands ending in curls, are whirling in the dance. The costume consists of short drawers of tiger skin, and a thin muslin scarf, of which only the end on the left shoulder is indicated. The deity is otherwise nude, except for the elaborate jewelry, consisting of a tiara, earrings (a crocodile earring, *maḥkara kunda*, in the right ear, a cylindrical earring, *patra kunda*, in the left), necklaces, armlets, bracelets also a living cobra on the right wrist, rings, belt, girdle, anklets, and a sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) consisting of a double row of pearls knotted on the left breast. The dwarf figure of Muyalaka, crushed to the ground, has one leg bent and holds a

cobra in one hand. The glory (*prabha mandala*, Tamil *tiruvasi*) springs from crocodile (*makara*) faces right and left of the base. The pedestal is missing.

The third eye of Siva, or eye of wisdom, corresponding to the *urna* of Buddhist iconography, represents an organ supposed to exist potentially in all men, but effectively only in the deity and in those who are released from the bond. There are two well-known Puranic legends relating to this eye. In the first we are told that once when Parvati was sporting with the Lord in the Himalayas she playfully covered both his eyes with her hands. Immediately the universe was plunged in darkness and all movement ceased. Siva then opened the third eye, like a sun. In the other story Uma, endeavoring to win the love of the Great God, who remained lost in contemplation, was aided by Kama-deva, the Indian Eros; awakened from his trance by an arrow from the lotus bow of the God of Love, the Lord in anger opened the third eye, and by its terrible energy destroyed the body of Kamadeva, who is therefore known as Ananga, the Bodiless.

The figure of Ganga, usually present in Siva's hair, is not shown in this example, but appears in the older figure described below. Her presence is explained as follows: originally a heavenly river, she fell to earth at the prayer of Bhagiratha in order that the lustration of the sons of Sagara might be duly accomplished, but was caught and lost in the matted locks of Siva's head — here perhaps a symbol of the Himalayan forests. Only at the continued prayer and penance of Bhagiratha she fell thence to earth; this last phase of the "Birth of Ganga" is a not uncommon theme of Pahari Rajput paintings (e. g., Coomaraswamy, A. K., *Rajput Painting*, pl. LXVI), and is represented also in the type of Siva image known as Gangadhara-murti.

So far we have considered the Dance of Siva only intellectually as an exoteric image, present in a temple built with hands. But the true place of Siva's dance is in the dancing hall of his lover's hearts — "O Thou that dancest the dance of bliss in the Hall of Consciousness!" says Tayumanavar, and in *Unmai Vilakṣam*, "The silent saints, destroying the threefold bond (*pasam*), are established where their self-hood is annihilated: there they behold the Sacred Dance and are filled with bliss."

A legend in the *Periya Purana* gives a pseudo-historical interpretation of the dance as follows:

"In the forest of Taragam there dwelt multitudes of heretical rishis, followers of the Mimamsa. Siva proceeded there to confute them, accompanied by



Fig. 4. Siva (Nataraja)

S. Indian, fifteenth century

Vishnu disguised as a beautiful woman, and by Vishnu's servant Adi-Seshan, the *naga* Ananta. The rishis were at first led to dispute amongst themselves, but their anger was soon directed against Siva, and they endeavored to destroy him by means of incantations. A fierce tiger was produced in the magic fires, and rushed upon him; but he seized it in his hands, and stripped off its skin with the nail of his little finger, and wrapped it about himself as a garment. The sages renewed their offerings, and produced a monstrous serpent, which Siva took in his hands and wreathed about his neck like a garland. Then he began to dance; but there rushed upon him a last monster in the shape of a malignant dwarf, Muyalaka. Upon him the god pressed the tip of his foot and broke the creature's back, so that it writhed upon the ground; then he resumed the dance, beheld of gods and rishis. On this occasion Adi-Seshan obtained the boon to behold the dance again in Tillai, sacred Cidambaram — the centre of the Universe (that is, as we shall see below, in one's own heart)."

The skull, crescent moon, black buck, axe, and tiger or lion's skin borne or worn by Siva in this and other aspects, are similarly explained in the *Suprabhedagama*, as produced by the incantations of rishis, whose wives had been attracted to Siva

when they saw him passing by on the slopes of Mount Meru (Rao, T. A. G. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, p. 113).

Ultimately this dance, which represents the best known, but only one of the many forms of Siva's dances, would appear to be derived from that of an aboriginal mountain god, afterward (?) identified with the Aryan Rudra (Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*, London, 1909, p. 203). In all important Saiva temples a special *Natana-sabha* or Dancing Hall—probably similar in form to the old Indian theatre—is allotted to Nataraja. The most ancient and sacred of such halls is at Cidambaram or Tillai.

In Saiva theology and devotional literature the philosophical and mystical significance of the dance are far more prominent than the details of the legends already quoted.

"The Lord of Tillai's hall a mystic dance performs. What's that, my dear?" says Manikka Vaçagar in the *Tiruvaçagam*. The answer is given in the *Tiruvatauvurar Purana*:

"Our Lord is the Dancer, who, like the heat latent in firewood, diffuses his power in mind and matter, and makes them dance in their turn."^{*}

The dance is, in fact, as we learn from other texts, a representation of the Cosmic Activity (more exactly, the "Five Activities" [*Pancakṛtya*] of *Sṛṣṭi*, creation or evolution; *Sṭhiti*, preservation or continued maintenance; *Samhara*, destruction or involution; *Tirobhava*, illusion or incarnation; and *Anugraha*, release or salvation) of the Supreme and Immanent Power.

It should be noted that from a Hindu point of view creation and destruction are never original nor final, but merely as the repeated cycle of evolution and involution of form in the substance of an eternal energy. Creation is "projection," destruction "withdrawal;" the process is without a beginning or end.

Thus the figure of Nataraja may be said to represent the Absolute in manifestation, and such a figure is complementary to the *lingam*, the *avyakta* (unmanifest) and non-anthropomorphic symbol of Siva, which is the form of the *dhruva bera* or principal immovable icon in almost all Siva temples. At Cidambaram (meaning "consciousness-ether") the principal shrine contains not even a visible *lingam*; the symbol is present only as an idea, and spoken of as an ether-lingam. The two conceptions may be compared to Ruysbroeck's Eternal Rest and Eternal Work.

The interpretation of the detailed symbolism is well known: "Creation arises from the drum (as sound is the primary manifestation of creative energy); protection proceeds from the assuring hand (*i. e.*, the lower right hand in *abhaya* position, signifying 'Fear not'); from the fire proceeds destruction; from the planted foot, illusion; the upraised foot bestows salvation" (*Unmai Vilakṣam* of Manavaçakan Kadandan, thirteenth century). The lower left

hand points to the lifted foot to indicate the refuge of the individual soul.

Or again, in the *Cidambara Mummani Kovai*: "O my lord, thy hand holding the sacred drum has made and ordered the heavens and earth and other worlds and innumerable souls. Thy lifted hand protects the multifarious animate and inanimate extended universe. Thy sacred foot, planted on the ground, gives an abode to the tired soul, struggling in the toils of *ḥarma*. It is thy lifted foot that grants eternal bliss to those who approach thee.* These Five Actions are indeed thy handiwork."

As regards the foot "planted on the ground," this is found to be the case in some representations. Here, however, the foot rests on the back of the *Apasmara purusa*,[†] *Muyalaka*, who represents *mala*, *anava*, or *avidya*—"the stain," "particularity," or "ignorance"; in other words, the bond (*pasam*) of "original sin," which forms the third category of Saiva theology,

According to the *Tiru-Arul-Payan*, "The dance of Nature (*prakṛti*) proceeds on one side, the dance of wisdom (*jnana*) on the other." That is to say, the *tiruvasi* represents the dance of Nature (material and individual energy) reflecting that of the informing Power.[‡]

It will be observed that earrings of different patterns are worn in the two ears—*maḥkara ḥundala* (appropriate either to a male or female figure) on the proper right, *patra ḥundala* or *todu* (appropriate here to a female figure) on the left. This is a peculiarity somewhat rarely seen in Indian sculpture; it indicates the presence of the Sakti as an essential part of the deity himself.§ This is, of course, a well-known dogma of Indian theology; numerous images are met with, in which one-half

*The "feet of the lord" have a special significance in Indian religion both as symbols (when represented alone) of the deity and as a place of refuge; the idea is something like that of the "footstool of the most high" in Biblical phraseology. In actual life, moreover, in India, he who seeks protection, pardon, or aid from another falls to the ground and embraces his feet. Such a greeting is appropriate from a *cela* to a *guru*, from a wife to a husband, from children to parents, from subjects to kings. Cf. also in the First Hymn of the *Tiruvacagam*, "Hail, foot of the lord! Hail, foot of him who not for an instant quits my heart!" etc., and *Unmai Vilakṣam*, continuing the text already quoted: "Driving away *maya*, burning *ḥarma*, crushing *anava*, by grace (*arul*) raising the soul and sinking it in the ocean of bliss—these are the works of the feet of Our Father."

†Representing, it should be noted, the *yakṣa vahanam* of earlier sculptures, *e. g.*, the *lingam* at Gudimallam (Rao, T. A. G. *Gopinatha, Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, p. 65 ff., and pl. II).

‡Sir P. Arunachalam states that the *tiruvasi* represents the Pranava, the syllable *om*, "which is the generalized symbol of all possible sounds, and therefore the fittest symbol of the Logos"; but it is clear from the texts (even if it were not otherwise evident) that Sound is already represented by the drum, while the interpretation of the *tiruvasi* given above seems to be more intelligible. *Tiruvasi* is, of course, only the Tamil name of the *prabha mandala*, *prabhavali* or *prabha torana* (glory), regularly associated with images of deities. At the annual winter festival of Cidambaram male devotees (probably in former times also females) may be seen dancing in the manner of Nataraja (Polonnaruwa bronzes and Siva worship and symbolism, J. R. A. S., Ceylon Br., Vol. XXIV, 1917).

§Other examples in the Siva (*Vinadhara Dakṣinamurti*) of M. F. A. 21.1826; the *Vajrapani* (Buddhist) of M. F. A. 17.2314. Cf. also Goloubew, *V. Antique bronze image of Siva Ardhanaṛisvara from Phrapatam in Southern Siam*, London, 1919; Sastri, S. K., *South Indian images of gods and goddesses*, Fig. 76; Gangoly, O. C., *South Indian bronzes*, 1915, pls. 1, III-XII, XIV-XVII, XX, XXI; and Coomaraswamy, A. K., *Visvakarma*, pls. 28, 29, 30 (in the *Pidari* of pl. 39 the same peculiarity occurs in the figure of a goddess).

It should be observed that the cylindrical or ring-shaped *patra ḥundala* (made of conch, or rolled palm leaf, or sheet gold) is by no means exclusively a woman's jewel, but is specifically such when represented in the left ear of a male deity.

*Cf. Eckhardt: "Just as the fire infuses the essence and clearness into dry wood, so has God done with man."



Fig. 5. Siva (Vinadhara Dakshinamurti)
S. Indian, sixteenth or seventeenth century



Fig. 6. Siva (Bhikshatana murti)
S. Indian, about 1800

of the whole body is male, the other female, representing Ardhanarisvara, "The lord whose half is feminine." Siva may be spoken of as "half of her form" and as "sinking in the fair expanse of her breast" (*Tiruvāçagam*).

However, in the case of Nataraja figures, Uma or Sivakami is usually represented by a separate and smaller figure standing to the proper left of the *nrtta murti*.

The figure described above is probably about one hundred years old. The second example (Fig. 4, M. F. A. 21.1829) is much older (fourteenth or fifteenth century?) and very much finer; it now lacks the glory, but has the pedestal, which is filled with rings for attachment when carried in procession. The account already given exactly applies, except in matters of detail—the figure of Ganga (the Ganges goddess) is represented in the whirling locks, the living cobra appears on the upper left arm, the short drawers are of ribbed muslin, and a muslin sash tied about the waist falls almost to the ground on either side. In this example we have not merely a formal statement of the prescribed theme adequate to purposes of edification, but also the expression of a living energy and grace; the imager has realized the dance

not merely in a logical objective way, but in the texture of his own flesh and the tension of his own muscles.

Siva is represented also in four types of Dakshinamurti (*dakṣhina*, probably in the sense of "adept," or "expert"), as the teacher of scripture and science. The figure in this Museum (Fig. 5, M. F. A. 21.1826) is that of the Vinadhara Dakshinamurti, "Dakshinamurti carrying the lute," as master of musical science. The deity is three-eyed and four-armed, the normal hands held as if playing the *vina*, the upper right holding the axe (*tanḱa*), the upper left the black buck (*kr̥shna mrga*). The figure is swayed, in *sama* or *a-bhanga* pose. The hair is dressed high in ascetic fashion (*jata mukuta*) and there is a large circular lotus ornament at the back of the head. The costume consists of very short tight drawers and a sash knotted at the sides; there is the usual elaborate jewelry (with different earrings in the right and left ears) and sacred thread. The figure itself is probably of sixteenth and seventeenth century date, the pedestal more recent.

In the Bhikshatana murti (Fig. 6, M. F. A. 21.1830) Siva is represented as a mendicant. This is a nude standing figure, three-eyed and



Figs. 7 and 8. *Devi (Uma, Parvati, or Sivakami)*



S. Indian, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

four-armed, the lower right hand in a pose not identified, the upper right hand with the drum (*dhakka*), the upper left hand in *kataka* pose, the lower left hand with the skull cup.

The deity is three-eyed and four-armed, nude, represented as walking, and wears wooden sandals. Part of the hair rises to a moderate height above the head, is knotted with two serpents, and bears the skull; the greater part falls in dishevelled matted locks (*jata bhara*) with the crescent moon on the left side. A serpent with expanded hood is coiled around the hips. The only costume consists of jewelry: fillet (*ushnisha bhushana*), earrings (*makara kundala* in right ear, *patra kundala* in the left), two necklaces (*hara*), armlets, bracelets, belt (*udara bandha*), a bell tied on the calf of the right leg, anklets, and finger rings, and a jewelled sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) separated into two parts on the right side. The pedestal is a low *bhadra pitha*, with rings for attachment when carried in procession. It may be remarked that the lower right hand extended downwards is supposed to touch, or nearly touch, the head of the deer which, together with the figure of a *bhuta* holding a tray to receive the offerings of food, is generally associated with the Bhikshatana murti.

According to the *Kurma Purana*, Siva's appear-

ance as a mendicant represents an act of penance for the sin of *Brahmahatya*—the slaying of a Brahman, incurred when he cut off one of the five heads of Brahma (it will be remembered, also, that Siva frequently wears a garland of skulls, the heads of the Brahmas of successive universes) upon the occasion of the latter's presumptuously claiming to be the ultimate creator, not merely the demiurge of the universe. The sin of slaying a Brahman attached itself to the Bhairava aspect of Siva. Bhairava then visited Vishnu, by the advice of Brahma (meanwhile restored to life), and incurred the further sin of slaying the doorkeeper, Visvakshena. The penance afterwards advised by Vishnu is that laid down in the Hindu law books, the essential part of which consists in living as an outcaste, carrying the skull in one hand as a begging bowl, and one of the long bones of the deceased (in this case the bone, *kankala*, of Visvakshena) in the other (the upper left hand of the image, in *kataka* pose, is probably intended to receive the *khatvanga* or *kankaladanda*, which should rest horizontally upon the left shoulder), and in begging food from not more than seven houses in any one day, saying upon each occasion, "Who is there that would feed the slayer of a *bhuna*?" that is to say, of a well-conducted learned Brahman.



Fig. 9. *Devi (Uma, Parvati, or Sivakami)*
S. Indian, twelfth to fourteenth century

According to another story (*Linga Purana*), Siva assumed the form of a nude mendicant in order to tempt the wives of the rishis living in the Danvana, for at this time even women and children had taken to the practice of austerities, and it was needful to bring them back to their proper place within the social system.

It may be further remarked that apart from these stories the conception of Siva wandering through the world as a naked ascetic is entirely appropriate to his character as a yogi, and the practise of all ascetics of the Saiva cults. It is possible that this is one of the points at which an early connection of Saivism with Buddhism appears.

Another representation of Siva (M. F. A. 21.1831, not here illustrated) is specifically known as Candrasekhara-murti, "He who bears the crescent moon in his hair," though this description is literally applicable to almost all Siva images. The deity, as usual, is three-eyed and four-armed; the normal arms in *abhaya* and *varada* pose (signifying "do not fear" and "charity"), the upper hand holding the axe and black buck. The costume and jewelry differ only in minor details from those of M. F. A. 21.1830.

The images of Devi, of which the recent acquisitions include three from the Beardsell Collection, one the gift of the late owner, are distinctly Saiva in character, and must have been associated with Siva images of the types known as Uma-sahita, "with Uma." The goddess as thus

accompanying Siva is known as Uma, Parvati, or Sivakami ("Siva's darling"). She has only the normal number of eyes and arms. She stands or sits to the left of the god, in "*kataka hasta*," and holds in her right hand a lotus, or has the fingers disposed as if holding a flower, or to receive a fresh flower daily.

The first example (Fig. 7, M. F. A. 21.1832) stands in the *samabhanga* ("easy sway") pose, the right hand raised in *kataka* pose, holding a blue lotus flower, the left pendant (*lola hasta*). The goddess wears a muslin *dhoti* extending below the knee, and elaborate jewelry — a high crown, circular plaque behind the head, crocodile earrings in both ears, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, rings, belt, girdle and anklets, and a double chain (like a double sacred thread) united between and below the breasts, and divided above and below to pass round the throat and abdomen. She stands on a lotus and rectangular pedestal with rings for attachment when carried in procession. Very possibly this figure was originally associated with the Nataraja (Fig. 4, M. F. A. 21.1829); in any case it must be of approximately similar date. A second standing figure (Fig. 8, M. F. A. 21.1820) of the goddess is in the *abhanga* pose ("medium sway"), the head in this case being inclined (in the *samabhanga* pose the head is always erect). The costume consists apparently of long tight trousers of figured muslin (*batik?*), although the projecting folds at the left groin and at the back suggest a *dhoti*, and jewelry, differing from that of the previous example in several details,—particularly in the presence of the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*),—consisting of a string of pearls, and in the form of the girdle (*mekala* or *kanci*), which has the *kirti-mukha* clasp, while festoons



Fig. 10. *Devi (Kali)* S. Indian, fifteenth century

of pearls hang down upon the thighs, and below the broad girdle hangs a narrower *katibandha*.

A third figure of the goddess (Fig. 9, M. F. A. 21.182) is seated at ease (*sukhasana*), with the left leg pendent, the right hand in *kataka* pose, the left in *varada*. The costume consists of a *dhoti* reaching the ankle, and the usual jewelry and sacred thread (a single string of pearls). The features are softer and fuller than is the case in the more recent types; the face, too, is considerably worn by the application of sandal paste in *pūja* (daily office). This is evidently the oldest of the figures described in the present article, and may be assigned to the twelfth century. It closely resembles a seated Parvati from Polonnaruwa, now in the Colombo Museum (Coomaraswamy, A. K., *Bronzes from Ceylon*, pl. VII, Fig. 12).

A much smaller, seated, four-armed image (Fig. 10, M. F. A. 21.1306), with noose (*pasa*) and skull cup (*kapala*) in the two left hands, represents a *tamasik** form of the goddess, as Kali.

ANANDA COOMARASWAMY.

Subscriptions to the Current Expenses of the Museum

ON February 9 the Museum issued the following appeal for Annual Subscriptions:—

The Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts ask the public for subscriptions toward meeting the running expenses of the Museum for 1922. In 1921, despite annual subscriptions of \$56,342.50, the largest on record, and despite income of \$133,888 from other sources, the Museum showed a deficit of \$25,220.44. If the total income shows no change in 1922, the Museum will show a yet larger deficit through a necessary increase of expenses already foreshadowed.

Apart from the insistent need of larger income, the Trustees believe that the Museum has never been in a position to render a greater service than it is to-day. The acquisitions of the year have been many and important, the attendance of the public has been larger than in any previous year, and the demand for lectures and guidance has markedly increased.

The Trustees are confident that there are many who believe that the maintenance and development of the spirit that art embodies are essential to the highest welfare of the community. In this belief the Trustees ask those who have not subscribed hitherto to become subscribers now; and they ask those who have subscribed in the past to consider an increase in their subscriptions. In 1921 the individual subscriptions ran from \$5.00 to \$1,000.00. The Trustees desire to state again that the Museum receives no aid from state or city and is dependent entirely upon the generosity of citizens for both maintenance and development.

The complete annual report for 1921 will be

*Images of any deity are classified as *sattvik*, *rajasik*, and *tamasik*; according to, their, ethos; these terms are often rendered as "pure," "passionate," and "dark." The Nataraja image, for example, is *rajasik*.

issued in a few weeks and will be sent to subscribers at once, and to others on application.

The Trustees desire to express through the Committee on the Museum, their grateful appreciation of the generosity of the annual subscribers and their faith in its continuance.

COMMITTEE ON THE MUSEUM

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An Early Sargent Portrait



Portrait of Robert de Cuirieux with his pet dog
J. S. Sargent, 1879

Purchased, 1922, from the Charles Henry Hayden Fund

Note

DR. GEORGE A. REISNER, Curator of Egyptian Art, returned to Egypt on January 21, and upon his arrival, about February 12, was to continue excavations at Kabushia (Meroë), begun by Mr. Dows Dunham, Assistant Curator, in November last. Of the three groups of pyramids under excavation, two are now finished, the Southern and the Northern, and work is well advanced on the third and last group of pyramids, known as the Western Cemetery in the plain.